

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES
FACE-TO-FACE MEETING AGREEMENT**

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
MARCH 27, 2002**

BRISTOL WARREN PARTICIPANTS: Helen Barboza, Superintendent of Schools; Roy Seitsinger, Director of Curriculum; Jane Correia, Director of Administration; Monique Latessa, Principal of Rockwell School; Stewart Armstrong, Principal of Byfield School; Robert Evans, Bristol Warren Education Association; James Hagan, Bristol Warren Education Association; Marjorie Biancuzzo, Rockwell School Improvement Team; Judith Smith, Byfield School; Mary Cabral, School Committee; Kathryn Crowley, Principal of Mt. Hope High School; Patricia Roberts, Assistant Principal of Mt. Hope High School; Beth Hayes, Chair of Mt. Hope High School Improvement Team; Margaret Vendituoli, Mt. Hope High School Improvement Team

RIDE STAFF: Todd Flaherty, Deputy Commissioner; Charlotte Diffendale, Office of Instruction; Paula Akers, Regents' Fellow; Steven Nardelli, Commissioner's Office; Diana Crowley, Office of Research, High School Reform, and Adult Education

RIDE WELCOME AND MEETING ORIENTATION

Deputy Commissioner Todd Flaherty welcomed the group and gave an overview of the process and objectives of the meeting including:

- Establishing of agreements on “next steps” as outlined in the School Performance Category Technical Assistance Bulletin with regard to required district/school/RIDE actions;
- Addressing district capacity for implementing activities/next steps (to be outlined in the May 1st CRP, Article 31 – Strategic Planning document for submittal to RIDE; this also needs to be approved publicly in a Bristol Warren School Committee meeting;
- Addressing RIDE capacity to support, if applicable; and
- Generating a meeting report which needs to be made “public” at the district’s school committee meeting.

DISTRICT/SCHOOL RESPONSE

Superintendent Helen Barboza made an overall presentation describing the district's response to the publication of the school-performance categorization and the action underway to raise student performance:

- The district has spent a great deal of time reviewing data for its strategic plan and school improvement plan; therefore the categorization was not a surprise.
- The district strategic plan will be reviewed annually.
- Due to the nature of voluntary professional development, the standards continuum differs by grade level.
- Standards are very firmly embedded in the classroom although their implementation varies within different schools.
- As part of the training through the University of Pittsburgh's "Principles of Learning" walk-throughs have helped zero in on practice.
- The budgets for individual schools have been based on needs, data, and standards.
- By design, the progression of progress has moved quicker at the K-5 level. This has been aided by standards-based report cards at the elementary level.
- Portfolios are standards-based.
- The goals of the District are clearly articulated across the District. The key to improvement is professional development. The structures are in place to focus on the individual classrooms.
- The school district is moving ahead and focusing on classroom practices.

Deputy Commissioner Flaherty asked the District to talk about the need for clear, measurable student results in their May plan. He emphasized that specific indicators need to be present in order for Bristol Warren to monitor its improvement.

The District responded by stating that it has the systems in place to achieve a 100% graduation rate within the next five years. This includes establishing a *Freshman Academy* and issuing quarterly reports on at-risk students. In addition, quantitative evaluation data will be collected. A new math series is also in place, which will address issues of diverse learning needs.

The Deputy Commissioner inquired about the strategic plan by asking if the strategies in place were working. For example, at the high school, 45% of

students do not meet the standard; yet at the middle school, only 30% of students who do not meet the standard. How does the available data influence matters of curriculum and instruction? Do student expectations differ at these schools?

The response was: "Bristol Warren is transitioning its culture to raise accountability at all levels." The curriculum-development discussion is intensifying within the East Bay Collaborative. Dr. Flaherty pointed out that curriculum is the function of a school committee. The District indicated that it needs a state stamp of approval for a curriculum. Ms. Cabral, a school committee representative, stated that school committees are not always well informed about curriculum so they would welcome more mandates from the State.

Byfield School, Grades K-3

Mr. Armstrong, the principal, explained that the school community recently completed its new school-improvement plan. The action plans are short-term and measurable. The professional development plan outlines where they are going and where they have been. The basis of the revisions is lists developed from the recommendations taken from the SALT Visit Report, November 2, 2001.

There was a discussion on the fact that the only indicator used to determine the performance category for Byfield School is the grade 3 Rhode Island Writing Assessment. Mr. Armstrong suggested adding more indicators (learning support indicators) such as the SALT Visit Report, the percentage of parent involvement, the changes in school climate, and the changes in student behavior.

Dr. Flaherty asked about expectations and needs. Mr. Stewart identified the following needs: Networks (East Bay Collaborative), professional development, and collaborative professional development with other districts and the state. When the school received its SALT Report, the school improvement team identified eighteen critical points. Examples include working on math and *Write Traits*. Ms. Smith identified a need for the school to attain more professional development in the *Write Traits* program.

Rockwell School, Grades K-3

The Rockwell School utilized data sources such as Information Works and scores from the Rhode Island Writing Assessment to revise its school improvement plan. The school improvement team is reviewing gaps and setting targets. During the past year, the staff has participated in numerous high-quality professional development opportunities, especially in the instructional models of balanced literacy and guided reading. The East Bay Collaborative was able to provide the school with a math expert to model standards-based lessons in the classroom.

The principal, Ms. Latessa, arrived at Rockwell School two years ago and has worked closely with the staff on standards, raising student expectations, and improving the school climate. Because Rockwell is a feeder school to Colt-Andrews School, it would be helpful if the test scores of the students at Colt-

Andrews could be included as an indicator in Rockwell's performance categorization. Dr. Flaherty responded by stating that would create a statistical problem.

Mt. Hope High School, Grades 9-12

Ms. Kathryn Crowley, the principal of Mt. Hope High School, arrived at Mt. Hope two years ago. The school has experienced high administrative turnover, with five principals in the past four years, and recently experienced a labor dispute. Bristol Warren schools were regionalized ten years ago. The high school remains on NEASC probation from its visit a few years ago. Also, Mt. Hope High School had a SALT Visit, which addressed several areas that were identified as needing improvement.

A number of steps were taken to improve student test scores. The results from the state assessment tests were reviewed at a faculty meeting and strategies were developed to improve scores. These include posting signage, disseminating information to parents, holding academic pep rallies, putting the test scores on student transcripts, changing the testing schedule, providing refreshments to students at test time, developing a course entitled *Believe in Yourself*, and giving greater responsibilities to the department chairs.

The school improvement team reviewed the *Mt. Hope High School Program of Studies* book to enhance its "All-Kids" agenda. New strategies were developed to raise student performance. These include the creation of *The Freshman Academy* and of an Advisor-Advisee system to identify troubled students. Much work has been invested in exploring the alteration of the school schedule, especially in the area of block scheduling. Other issues include improving the following: School climate, student attendance, and the eighth-grade transition process. Professional development has been offered to the staff on standards, the English-language arts has been revised through the K-12 Curriculum Development Committee, and math scores are improving. The compact following the SALT visit was recently completed.

PROPOSED PROGRAMMATIC/INSTRUCTIONAL ACTION

Bristol Warren has identified several key strategies to address literacy and numeracy in its K-12 effort to move to a standards-based system. These strategies involve targeting critical activities for the diverse student population. They include the following:

- The summer reading "Fifth Quarter" program that was established last year will expand for students in grades 1-5 to serve 300 children.
- The "Fifth Quarter" summer reading program will be established for children in Kindergarten to help them transition to grade 1.

- Reading specialists and a professional-development specialist will continue to be funded at the same level as last year.
- The Kindergarten program will be enhanced through child screening so that strengths and needs of students will be identified prior to the September school opening.
- Kindergarten teachers will have extensive professional-development opportunities over the summer and during the school year.
- A *Saturday Academy* for students in grades 6-9 will be held for fourteen Saturdays starting in March. Those students who have been identified as at-risk for failure will participate in literacy and/or numeracy instructional programs.
- The new *Mt. Hope Program of Studies* will include an additional half-year study-skills requirement for ninth graders. This course will enhance reading, research, and study skills to help students be more successful at the high-school level.
- Representative teacher teams from every building, K-12, will attend mathematics workshops throughout the year from the East Bay Collaborative.
- Integrated Math will be added to the *Mt. Hope High School Program of Studies*. Ninth graders will be given instruction through this new curriculum, which integrates a variety of math courses.
- There will be an on-site coordinator to meet the needs of the ESL population.

RIDE/BRISTOL WARREN AGREEMENTS

The following agreements were reached in the meeting:

- Bristol Warren (district) will use measurable student performance objectives in their strategic plan which will become the basis for monitoring progress toward student achievement goals. The measurable objectives will be included in the May 1, 2002 plan being submitted to RIDE;
- The standards-based curriculum in both mathematics and English language arts will be completed by August 2002;
- School level improvement plans will specify measurable student performance objectives;
- Bristol Warren (district and school) professional development plan will ensure that all teachers receive training in standards-based instructional

- techniques through a well articulated professional development plan;
- Teaching and learning issues which address the needs of a diverse student population will be specifically addressed in all school and district level improvement strategies;
 - Bristol Warren (district and schools) will employ an extensive data analysis effort to monitor student achievement progress at all levels;
 - Bristol Warren schools identified as low performing will include in their improvement plans, actions addressing the questions/issues in the attached data analysis sheets;
 - Bristol Warren (High School) will clarify the graduation expectations are for all students through development of a "core curriculum."

POTENTIAL RIDE SUPPORT FOR BRISTOL WARREN

- RIDE Field Service staff will continue to respond to specific requests for assistance at all school levels.
- RIDE will continue to support the East Bay Educational Collaborative with any available funds that will assist Bristol Warren (district) with teacher professional development.